

IN-STORE

## H.Stern touts Brazilian modernism within redesigned New York flagship

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*H.Stern's Oscar Niemeyer Monument earrings*

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By JEN KING

After major renovations Brazilian jeweler and silversmith H.Stern has reopened its Fifth Avenue flagship in New York.

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H.Stern temporarily shuttered its flagship, which has called Fifth Avenue its home since the 1960s, for the space to undergo intensive renovations, a move that coincides with its 70th anniversary celebration beginning this September. Brands often redesign flagship stores so that the surroundings of their products reflect modernity and relevance as time progresses.

"The new boutique aesthetic highlights key elements of H.Stern's roots and brand identity - such as the understated luxury as seen in metal textures and organic shapes - while introducing a more modern and unique design," said Roberto Stern, president and creative director at **H.Stern**, Rio de Janeiro.

"We wanted the renovation to provide an intimate experience for customers with an understated and subtle aesthetic that is still luxurious," he said. "The architecture complements the delicate craft of the jewelry by creating an atmosphere that reflects the

inside of a jewelry box.

"The interior features wood paneling with neutral tones creating an inviting jewelry experience. The design incorporates an emphasis on organic shapes including the dome ceiling and curved display cases."

### Homecoming

In March, H.Stern relocated to a gallery-inspired pop-up shop in New York's SoHo neighborhood.

Rather than shut its doors completely during its uptown renovations, H.Stern ventured south to test the waters in New York's SoHo neighborhood while not limiting its consumers' access and service.

Located at 104 Greene Street, between Spring and Prince Streets, this is H.Stern's first pop-up boutique in the United States. At its temporary location, which opened on March 2, the Brazilian jeweler shares the street with boutiques from Louis Vuitton, Chloé and Tiffany & Co ([see story](#)). The space is set to close in a few month's time.



### *H.Stern's SoHo pop-up*

As with the SoHo boutique, H.Stern's flagship, which reopened June 25, evokes the jeweler's Brazilian aesthetic and aligns with its cosmopolitan designs. The highly anticipated redesign was developed by Studio Arthur Casas and reflects the atmosphere of a life-sized jewelry box.

Located at 645 Fifth Avenue, the boutique was previously renovated in 1997 and is now the third H.Stern storefront with an aesthetic designed by Studio Arthur Casas.

Renovations included updates of the store's facade as well as its interiors.

The design team removed the vinyl panels and large window displays and replaced the facade with 30-feet by 30-feet high gold like walls. Exclusive to the Fifth Avenue flagship this detail works to communicate the uniqueness of H.Stern among its peers on the High Street.

H.Stern's new facade also incorporates a grid design based on the brand's "s" logotype.

Metal panels come together to form a scale-like texture, catching the sunlight on golden tones. This storefront element highlights its urban surroundings but does so without competing with the jewelry found within.



*Facade of H.Stern's New York flagship, photographed by Erica Berger*

Within, H.Stern's redesigned space includes organic shapes and a central dome that "erases the visual boundaries." The store embraces Brazilian modernism through the placement of wooden panels used to enhance the space's horizontal lines.

H.Stern pieces are displayed in showcases and desks designed in a curvilinear shape. Consumers are invited to view pieces that seemingly "float" above these structures in chairs made of wood, leather, metal and fabric designed by mid-century American designer Milo Baughman.

Lighting used throughout the boutique was designed by l'Observatoire International. The fixtures assist in discovery of H.Stern's jewelry both on and off the consumer, as well as the overall space.

H.Stern's 2,100-square foot store includes two floors, the public sales area and a private lounge found in the subterranean level, where jewelry can be explored in a private setting.



*Interior of H.Stern's renovated flagship in New York, photographed by Erica Berger*

The jeweler concentrated on the details of its flagship to “transform a construction puzzle into a homogenous composition” where consumers can relax from the hustle of New York.

#### Never out of service

Closing retail doors to begin renovations may seem like a lost opportunity for sales, but it should be a time for brands to build relationships with their customers.

Luxury retailers can focus on other efforts during this time to create deeper customer connections. By making up for lost time, retailers are able to maintain sales and possibly strengthen bonds with their customers ([see story](#)).

H.Stern achieved this by maintaining a retail presence in New York through its temporary SoHo pop-up location.

Similarly, France’s Cartier has temporarily relocated further up Fifth Avenue while its flagship undergoes extensive renovations through 2016.

To ensure that there is no lapse in service, Cartier decided to relocate for the time being rather than shutting its doors completely during construction. This retail strategy places emphasis on Cartier’s quality of customer care and service as the jeweler does not want to disrupt the purchasing preferences of local and visiting enthusiasts ([see story](#)).

As with Cartier, it has yet to be determined if H.Stern will maintain operations at both retail locations. The spaces each represent the neighborhoods in which they encompass.

"[Our] SoHo boutique will stay open for a few more months," Mr. Stern said. "We haven't decided whether or not we will explore other opportunities in the neighborhood.

"The concept of the Fifth Avenue renovation was confirmed prior to the design of the SoHo pop-up boutique as the approach to each location was very different," he said. "The SoHo boutique was inspired by an art gallery as we thought the aesthetic aligned with the neighborhood.

"The renovated Fifth Avenue boutique evokes our Brazilian identity combined with

H.Stern's cosmopolitan design. The facade of the Fifth Avenue boutique is incredibly unique and the design is exclusive to this location. We wanted an exclusive approach to this very cosmopolitan location."

Final Take

*Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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